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| 1 | **TITLE** |  |
|  | Give your report an informative title and mention the podcast that you are putting online.  Podcasting for Student Information Access – “A podcast guide to help DUT students log onto the Student Portal”  Podcast # 1 : Login Procedure to DUT Student Portal  The Podcast I have created provides a step by step tutorial, showing students how to log onto the DUT Student Portal. The DUT student portal provides a wealth of information and resources to students and thus it is essential that every student should be familiar with the log in procedure. | 3/2/1/0 |
| 2 | **CONTEXT** |  |
|  | Which current international and/or local trends are triggers for your investigation?  “We cannot engage today’s students using methodologies of yesterday” said Rodney Ichikowitz – CEO of the Core Group which is the brand custodian of some of the world’s leading brands such as Apple and Nintendo.  Local: City Campus – The Faculty of Arts & Design is located at City Campus, a remote campus to the main student hubs – viz Steve Biko and ML Sultan Campuses. Thus, Students at City Campus do not have immediate or easy access to the all departments at DUT E.G Finance, Exams, Housing. It is therefore imperative that students use the portal, to apply for residences, access their exam results, timetables and other information.  DUT comprises of seven campuses spread over KwaZulu Natal – viz Steve Biko, MLSultan, Ritson, City Campus, Brickfield, Indumiso and Riverside, with the latter two in the KZN midlands. Due to the location of the campuses, the portal is the main method of communication and dissemination of information to students. It is therefore imperative for all DUT students to be adept at logging into the portal so that they can access their students email accounts and other relevant information.  DUT is currently running a pilot project – “Towards Readiness for Mobile Learning” (mLearning), exploring the advantages of mLearning. Educational Technologist, Gita Mistri, explains on the DUT website, “Educational Podcasting is particularly appealing because its portable nature allows one to listen to a podcast at one’s own convenience and as frequently as one pleases.”  South Africa: According to the universities website, the University of KwaZulu Natal, is the first University in South Africa to introduce Podcasting as an educational tool. | 3/2/1/0 |
| 3 | **CHALLENGES** |  |
|  | Which challenges and/or opportunities exist in your own teaching/**working** environment which you could possibly address through podcasting?  As discussed above, DUT is a multi-site institution. If students are adept at accessing the student portal, the information the portal disseminates will make the study environment at DUT somewhat easier.  Last year I developed an online Blackboard classroom, entitled “Sanjuka’s Online IT Help Desk – Computer Skills and an IT Resource Centre”. This gives staff and students 24/7 access to a wealth of computer training and answers to computer related FAQ’s. My classroom eliminates the need for me to repeat the same solutions to common problems over and over again.  Expanding from my classroom, I have now decided to create a podcast – explaining to students the login procedures to the student portal – as this is the most frequent query being made by students at the moment. With podcasting, the answers can be communicated to students even when I am not at my desk, or even when there is no network connectivity or a power outage (common occurrence at City Campus of late due to the major renovations currently underway).  Handing out a printed manual detailing login procedures from a mass printed batch of 20 000 copies is not ideal – it is impersonal, costly and a waste of paper. Handing an audio/video file keeps students entertained, intrigued, amazed, and keen to try listening/viewing the file.  Podcasts are also not as easily lost as hard copy notes are!  When changes are to be made, editing the soft copy is an easier, quicker and cheaper alternative compared to scrapping hard copies and having them re-printed. Podcasts will avoid redundant data lying around. With soft copies, the new updated information can be disseminated to all instantly. | 3/2/1/0 |
| 4 | **PROBLEM STATEMENT** |  |
|  | Phrase a problem in the form of a question.  Would an audio/video file explaining the login procedure to the DUT student portal alleviate the difficulty experienced by students when attempting to log on, thereby decreasing the number of requests made to me by students for assistance to log on? | 3/2/1/0 |
| 5 | **THEORY** |  |
|  | Which educational theories seem most relevant to your investigation?  Briefly describe each theory's key characteristics.  In 1994, I purchased my first home printer, a Lexmark Inkjet 1200. Sixteen years later, I still fondly remember the audio instructions in a pleasant female voice – “There is a paper jam, please power the printer off, then clear the paper path.” Sixteen years ago, my Grolier online encyclopedia, would broadcast on startup, “I have a dream…,” by the famous Martin Luther King.  Those audio files, worked like a dream – compared to the many text based help files and printed manuals which I have never referred to, to date.  Podcast # 1 that I have created, addresses the issue of logging on to the DUT portal and email. If one cannot log on, one cannot access any ‘help’ via email. Thus it makes perfect sense that the help files are in a separate audio/video file on a mobile device or stored offline in another remote location. Podcasts can stop the vicious circle of trying to access material from a location that is already inaccessible.  Connectivism is a learning theory for the digital age. Learning methods have changed considerably over the last few decades.  Constructivism suggests that learners create knowledge as they attempt to understand their experiences (Driscoll, 2000, p. 376).  Educause Review reported that the combination of wireless technology and mobile computing is resulting in escalating transformations of the educational world.  Millennial Students were born after 1981 and began arriving on college campuses in 2000. The Millennial students also known as **Generation Y are extremely comfortable with technology.** This is the first generation that has no real memory of life without computers. | 6/4/2/0 |
| 6 | **METHODOLOGY** |  |
|  | What is action research?  According to O’Brien (2001), the term action research is used synonymously with other terms like participatory research, collaborative inquiry, emancipator research, action learning and contextual action research. **Action research is described in the same article as ‘learning by doing’** and as such involves a degree of reflection and collaboration. Essentially action research is a cyclic process that aims at improving through continuous reflection.  image008.gif  Figure 1 Steps in Action Research Cycle  <http://www2.fhs.usyd.edu.au/arrow/arer/017_files/image008.gif>  How have you used the methodology's structure for your investigation?  I created a podcast – a plain audio file, and then tested on students. I realized that I would have to incorporate images into the podcast – or screen captures so that they could ‘watch’ the demo as well for improved understanding. I then created an enhanced podcast –audio and video file with equipment that I already own, thus no major costs were incurred.  I downloaded a program - RenderSoft CamStudio –which is a tool for recording screen activity into standard AVI video files. This was shareware.  I ran the pilot again, and this time there was improved understanding by students. | 3/2/1/0  3/2/1/0 |
| 7 | **DESIGN** |  |
| 7.1 | **The vision**  What is the vision for your use of podcasting in your course in the long term?  What will it aim to achieve, how will you share your podcasts with your students, and what reaction do you anticipate from your students?  Pod/Vod casting will create the next paradigm in education.  I have created a website [www.podcasting.webkeeper.co.za](http://www.podcasting.webkeeper.co.za) where my podcasts are available for download  Students will have access to the podcasts via a server, copies will be saved to CD’s, or transmitted to students mobile devices via the network, data cable or Bluetooth.  Reams of paper have/will be saved - as there will be no need to print login manuals for the thousands of students at DUT. A master copy (enlarged and laminated will be displayed on the notice boards for the students who may not be comfortable with working with audio/video files. Face to face and personal one on one support is still available to the few students who are still unable to login.  I anticipate that students will now be more informed wrt the procedures at DUT as they know will be able to log onto the DUT Portal. | 3/2/1/0 |
| 7.2 | **Podcasting in Higher Education at DUT**  How will the podcasting encourage interaction/ collaboration/ engagement/ participation/ active learning?  Podcasting simply makes access to information easier. Sharing of Podcasts will encourage students to work together, to share files, new technologies, and interact on more levels, via email and other social networking sites etc. | 3/2/1/0 |
| 7.3 | **Working smart**  How will you use podcasting to make your life easier?  In my day to day working environment as a Desktop Practitioner at City Campus, I am inundated with IT queries from both students and staff.  My podcasting endeavor aims to assist my students in a more efficient manner, which at the same time is user friendly, and personalised. Student still have the assurance that a real person is behind the scenes of the audio/video file I provide them with. Students can learn the concepts at their own pace, from the comfort of their own workstations, home PC’s, or even via their mobile devices while on the bus whilst travelling home.  Freeing up mundane tasks, will allow me more time to focus on making strategic IT decisions. | 3/2/1/0 |
| 7.4 | **Student Attendance**  How do you think podcasting will affect student attendance? How will you design your podcasts to enable students to get the best from face to face meetings and learning via electronic media?  Aim - Podcasting to enable students to have anywhere, anytime access to their lectures. Even when I am busy or not at my desk, students can obtain the media file and log on. This saves time, and time is money. The results will be reduced downtime, Once students learn, they will naturally share their knowledge and assist their fellow colleagues, encouraging a community of practice and an active working, learning, teaching environment.  I will schedule face to face meetings for demonstrations of difficult and new concepts. At least once every term, I will set aside the first period available with students for a face to face demonstration how to log on, thereafter the podcasts will be available as demos.  According to Bull (2010:117), the challenges for podcasting journalists is to bring high standards podcasts in terms of accuracy while retaining that informal web-friendly, personal style. | 3/2/1/0 |
| 7.5 | **Feasibility**  What infrastructure and resources (a) are, and (b) ought to be in place in your learners' environment in order for this project to be successful?  Infrastructure that already exists at the City Camus Open Access Lab :  **A server** with ample storage space for my series of Podcasts – Students can access the multimedia files directly off the server, via the network.  I have made copies of the podcast available on numerous **CD’s** – which are loaned out to students - CD’s are affordable – I have used CD-RW’s (re-writeable CD’s) so that I can delete the podcast if I need to and re-use the CD’s if need be to save updated versions.  A quick survey of students at the Open Access Lab – resulted in all stating that they owned a **cell phone** or other **MP3 /MP4 device / USB Flash Drive**. Thus students have the option of saving the file to their cell phones, **iPods** etc.  If files are to be sent from server to cell phone, a Bluetooth dongle will be purchased (approx R 250 once off) – this will allow free, fast and easy transfer of files to students cell phones once the blue tooth setting on their phones are switched on. | 3/2/1/0 |
| 8 | **IMPLEMENTATION** |  |
| 8.1 | **Pilot activity**  Describe the pilot activity you have tried out with two or three volunteer students/participants (or your colleagues!)  Carried out a mini pilot with 2 students at different intervals as It was difficult to have all 3 available at the same time viz Divesh, Luvesh, Anusha.  I initially played the simple audio file on the log in procedure, which they understood and all three managed to log on, however with some difficulty as they were all new to the DUT Student Portal.  When I enhanced my podcast to incorporate images, and re-piloted, the three participants found logging on very easy and made no errors as they could visualize and hear the instructions. | 3/2/1/0 |
| 8.2 | **Relevance**  How does this activity aim to address the challenges and opportunities you have identified?  Podcasts are quick, easy and cheap to produce. They are mobile and thus provide flexible learning opportunities. One can learn while commuting to campus. They encourage more involvement by the students. This is active learning. | 3/2/1/0 |
| 8.3 | **Feedback**  What feedback did you receive from volunteer students/participants? Provide a basic analysis.   |  |  | | --- | --- | | Divesh | Divesh considers himself a techno literate user. Divesh was exposed to this type of instructional medium for the first time, and his feelings were that this is a more personal type of tutoring compared to printed manuals. Divesh did say that first prize goes to personal, one on one face to face tutoring, however he agreed that due to time and cost constraints in any organization this is simply not practical, thus the approach of pod/vod casting is the next best option. He felt that having log in instructions in an electronic version that could be saved allowed for less pressured learning, where one could repeat the material over and over again, and work at one’s own pace. | | Luvesh | Luvesh considers himself a techno savvy user at an expert level. He felt that pod/vod casting’s show and tell approach is an excellent concept. Luvesh personally subscribes to many pod and vodcasts that assists him in his career as an IT lecturer and web designer. Luvesh has now decided to use podcasts to grow his customer base for his web design business.  Jason Van Orden explains that podcasts are effective for promotion, marketing and quickly growing a focused audience. It is not like radio where you listener is waiting for something that may interest him. He has chosen to listen to your podcast because it already interests him. | | Anusha | Techno Literate user who is keen to dabble with any new technology to enhance her busy study life. Anusha mentioned that the podcast was engaging and that I managed to quickly gain her focus and attention from the beginning, as the material I was demonstrating was very relevant to her as the majority of users had no idea to even log on and were thus not maximizing the features the portal offered. | | 3/2/1/0 |
| 9 | **REFLECTION** |  |
| 9.1 | **Assumptions**  Which assumptions did you make about yourself and your learners? What did you learn from your assumptions after implementing the activity?  I realized that the more one puts themselves in their listeners' shoes, the better one will be able to speak directly to them. Keep the tone natural and conversational, as if one is speaking with a listener face-to-face.  I assumed that creating professional podcasts would be time consuming and expensive. However I was glad to find out that I could create the audio/video file with equipment that I already owned, thus no major costs were incurred.  Even the program I used to create my podcast was Shareware. | 3/2/1/0 |
| 9.2 | **Future adjustments**  In the light of the feedback received and the lessons you have learnt, how will you adapt your activity and/or your classroom during the next action research cycle?  I’m in control of what I podcast, and when I podcast, thus this privilege must be used wisely and to maximum benefit | 3/2/1/0 |
| 9.3 | **Impact**  What impact do you envisage this intervention could make, or has made on either or all of the following: you, your learners, the curriculum and the institution?  I believe that with the growing influence of social media in society, educators have to adapt to new ways of engaging students in the learning process.  Bryan Alexander, in his article, Going Nomadic: Mobile Learning in Higher Education (2004) says, "More broadly, mobile and wireless computing has altered the rhythms of social time and has changed uses of social space." (p.28)  Within higher education, instructors are beginning to realize the impact of this both positively and negatively in creating communities of learners within their courses.  Students bring to the course an extensive network of information input, peer connections, and the potential of a wider scope of application than what has been the case until now.  The negative side of things is the challenge of "managing" not only the multitasking of the students but their insistence upon continual connectivity even when participating in a physical learning space with an instructor and other physical peers around them.  Some instructors have seen this as something to be controlled through disabling access for the duration of the class while others are trying to integrate this reality into the learning environments (Alexander, 2004). | 3/2/1/0 |
| 9.4 | **Lessons learnt**  What lessons have you learnt in the various phases during your year as a DUT Podcaster?  Podcasting is a convenient, automatic and inexpensive way to reach my students  Human voice adds a personal connection to my content. However speaking on video/audio differs from live.  I had to use a different pace of speaking when recording, as I had to make allowances time so that students could process the steps and execute them on their PC’s before moving onto the next step.  Podcasting gave me the wonderful idea of recording a personal voice over for my wedding – My husband and I played our personal pre-recorded speeches at our wedding. A few weeks after my wedding I received a compliment from my niece Kajol, a 5 year old, - “Your wedding was the best, especially the speeches!” | 3/2/1/0 |
| 10 | **BIBLIOGRAPHY** |  |
|  | Please use the Harvard referencing method.  Alexander, B. (2004) Going Nomadic: Mobile Learning in Higher Education. Educause Review, vol. 39, no.5 (September/October 2004): 28--35.  Bull, A. 2010. *Multimedia Journalism: A Practical Guide.* 1. Oxon: Routledge  Daily Mail. 2010. Kids dream of an iPhone 4 for Christmas, *The Daily News*, October 25: 1  *EDUCAUSE Review,* vol. 39, no. 5 (September/October 2004): 28–35. http://www.educause.edu/EDUCAUSE+Review/EDUCAUSEReviewMagazineVolume39/GoingNomadicMobileLearninginHi/157921  <http://www.dut.ac.za/pages/31298>  UKZN Promotes Podcasting (online). 2009. Available <http://www.ukzn.ac.za/ukznonline/v3/09/s4.html> [Accessed20 September 2010]  O’Brien, R. 1998. An overview of the methodological approach of action research. [online]. Available at: http//edtech.dut.ac.za [Accessed 20 September 2010]  <http://www.rendersoftware.com/products/camstudio>  [http://www.how-to-podcast-tutorial.com/seven-reasons-to-create-your -own-podcast.htm](http://www.how-to-podcast-tutorial.com/seven-reasons-to-create-your%20-own-podcast.htm) Jason Van Orden  Driscoll, M. (2000). Psychology of Learning for Instruction. Needham Heights, MA, Allyn & Bacon  Media Week January 25, 2010 Vol 20 No. 4  Shapshak, T. 2010. Let’s not forget to Interact. *The Business Times*, October 25:12 | 3/2/1/0 |
| 11 | **WOW! Factor** |  |
|  | Up to six marks will be awarded for the wow factor. | 6/4/2 |
|  | **TOTAL** |  |